

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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CONTACT: Tara McGuinness

Mark Bayer

(202) 225-2836

GOP FAVORS INDUSTRY OVER U.S. SECURITY, GAGS DEBATE ON CARGO, HAZMAT, AND CHEMICAL SECURITY LOOPHOLES

Outraged Markey asks Republicans ‘What are you afraid of?’

Washington, D.C. – Today House Republicans blocked forty-seven Democratic amendments to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authorization bill including five amendments offered by Representative Ed Markey (D-MA) which would: require the inspection of all cargo before it is transported on passenger planes, increase the security of and re-route shipments of extremely hazardous materials away from high-risk terrorist target areas, increase security at chemical facilities and provide whistleblower protections to workers who report a homeland or national security problem and direct DHS to undertake a homeland security assessment of the risks associated with any proposal to construct, operate or expand an LNG terminal and report on any recommendations for security or mitigation measures. On the very same day that Senate Republicans are demanding an ‘up or down’ vote on judicial nominees, House Republicans have shut down votes on Rep. Markey’s amendments to close dangerous security loopholes in the aviation, chemical, and transport, industries that continue to threaten our national security.

“I am outraged that House Republicans have blocked votes on some of the most critical issues that continue to leave our nation vulnerable to another terrorist attack,” said Rep. Markey.

Addressing his Republican colleagues, Markey asked, “What are you afraid of? Are you afraid that the truth about how vulnerable we remain to attacks might frighten the American people? Is that why you are blocking an amendment which would simply inform passengers that the commercial cargo onboard their flights has not been screened for explosives? Don’t the American people, who have made so many sacrifices since 9/11, at least deserve information about the threats that they face? Perhaps you are worried that an ‘up or down vote’ on these critical issues might inform the public about how House Republicans continue to shower their friends in the cargo and chemical industries with special favors while leaving wide open loopholes in our homeland security and leaving the concerns of the American people behind.”

“We don’t need any more warnings to know that we remain vulnerable to another terrorist attack. This week alone, not one, but two planes were re-routed away from Logan Airport in Boston when it was discovered that passengers on board were on the ‘no-fly’ terrorist list. We are far from where we need to be, and putting a gag order on key amendments prevents legislative action on these loopholes.”

“This Department of Homeland Security authorization bill can be simply summarized: score 1 for the chemical, rail, aviation and shipping industries, score 0 for the national security concerns of the American people. Republicans are fighting to leave every homeland security loophole behind while putting the special interests first,” said Rep. Markey.

WHAT REPUBLICANS DON’T WANT TO TALK ABOUT: HOMELAND SECURITY LOOPHOLES MAKE U.S. VULNERABLE TO ATTACK

Markey demands 100% cargo screening

“Twenty-two percent of all the air cargo that is transported in the United States is loaded aboard passenger planes,” said Rep. Ed Markey, a co-author of the bipartisan legislation. “So while you and I empty our pockets, remove our shoes, walk through the metal detector, and as our baggage is being

screened, tons and tons of mail and cargo packages are loaded under our seats without ever being physically screened,' the Massachusetts Democrat said."

[CNN, 5/17/05, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/TRAVEL/05/17/air.cargo.security/index.html>]

Mother of 9/11 victim says DHS has neglected its responsibility

"Mary Fetchet, whose son died in the 9/11 attacks, also attended the press conference to support the legislation. 'By double-locking the front door and leaving the back wide open, the DHS has neglected its responsibility to provide the highest standard of security available to the American people,' she said."

[CNN, 5/17/05, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/TRAVEL/05/17/air.cargo.security/index.html>]

U.S. vulnerable -- homeland security loopholes still wide open

"A passenger was able to board a transatlantic flight bound for Boston, despite being on the U.S. government's no-fly list. Airlines are supposed to check passengers against a no-fly list before they allow them to board the airplane. Once the flight is en route, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security also checks the manifest against the no-fly list. Most of the diversions requested by the United States have occurred because a passenger's name was found to match one on the list after the flight took off."

[Reuters, 5/17/05, <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=8523451>]

Markey: New policy needed - No wheels up until the No-Fly list has been checked off

"Yesterday's incident prompted US Representative Edward J. Markey to call for the checks to take place before flights take off. 'It is unacceptable that checks against the list are performed after the plane has left the gate and may already be in the air,' said a statement issued by Markey, a Malden Democrat. Right now we're still checking it as the plane is in the air and the potential terrorist is on the plane.'" [Boston Herald, 5/18/05, <http://news.bostonherald.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=83622>]

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